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THEOLOGICAL INSTRUCTION IN SWITZERLAND.

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II.

ZÜRICH.

Following our chronological order we pass from Basel between the Jura Mountains and the Black Forest, turn a little southward from the valley of the Rhine, and take our first long look at the snow-peaks of the higher Alps from the shores of the lake of Zürich.

In accordance with my purpose of calling attention to the various advantages offered by the Swiss universities to the American pastor or student of theology, I must be pardoned if I tarry a little over the natural attractions of this by far the most beautifully situated of the three university towns of German Switzerland. The city itself is the northern rival of Geneva, which it has finally outstripped in population and bids fair soon to equal in beauty. Charmingly situated at the point where the Limmat leaves the lake, Zürich is flanked on three sides by considerable hills with fine views and delightful forest walks; the hill on the west, the Uetliberg, being a miniature Rigi, with its own railway and hotel and a view quite as extensive as that from the Rigi, though, of course, less imposing. The lake shore is bordered by quays laid out with great care and looking across the water to the glittering peaks of the snow-capped mountains. Everywhere one receives the impression of thrift and energy, while the more modern residences in the suburbs show unusual taste. Few American cities are making such rapid growth.

Again, Zürich is a most admirable starting point for many little trips in northern Switzerland, and he who spends a summer semester there is able not only to drink in the daily beauty of the immediate surroundings but also to choose the most favorable days for longer excursions. Lucerne, the Rigi, Pilatus, the

Falls of the Rhine, Wesen with the beautiful Wallensee, Glarus and the Klönthal may each be easily visited in a single day, not to mention the points of interest upon the lake itself, to be reached in an hour or two either by train or boat. In my own judgment no other university town of German Switzerland offers such attractions in itself and its surroundings to one who has a summer semester (practically the months of May, June and July) at his disposal.

The educational advantages of Zürich compare not unfavorably with the beauty of its situation. An enthusiastic teacher in Berlin claims that there is no city of its size in the world which is such a center of intellectual activity; yet it must be borne in mind that the popular departments in Zürich are those of medicine and the natural sciences rather than theology. The number of theological students is smaller even than at Bern, averaging about forty. This in itself is somewhat depressing, especially to one coming from one of the larger German universities, and it is difficult for a lecturer to show much enthusiasm where there are only some half-dozen listeners. Another disadvantage is that not infrequently an interesting course of lectures has to be abandoned because the number of students applying is insufficient. At the same time, one soon becomes accustomed to the emptiness of the lecture rooms, and learns that the ability of a professor is by no means always measured by the number of his auditors. This latter fact must be constantly borne in mind in French Switzerland, where the comparatively few students of theology are scattered among six schools.

The following are the best known professors in the Zürich theological faculty.

The most marked figure, beyond all question, is the venerable Professor Gustav Volkmar, a man who remarkably connects the past and present of German criticism. He is now eighty-three years of age, and is one of the best living representatives of Baur's school of criticism, whose conclusions are now being so greatly modified even by those who accept its principles. It is marvelous to sit in his class-room, as he lectures on New Testament Introduction or explains some New Testament passage,

and to note the keenness of his mind and the firmness of his grasp of the theme, or to mark the quick perception and amused smile with which he corrects a false rendering by one of his pupils. So, too, if one were only to listen to his deep, resonant voice without looking at the age lines in his face, he would think of him as in the sixties rather than the eighties. I notice by the catalogue for this coming winter that he expects to lecture ten hours a week as usual.

Everyone who sits in his classroom must feel that he is listening to the results of long and minute study of the New Testament, yet as a critic Professor Volkmar stands on the extreme left. As a single instance, he regards the anti-Pauline tendency of Jewish Christianity as underlying the Revelation, and believes that the *beast* of chapter xiii. 11, etc., and the *false prophet* of chapters xvi. and xix. were intended to represent the Apostle Paul himself. In the same way he regards even the gospel of Mark, and so, of course, the others, as largely epic rather than historic in their character.

There was a bit of political romance connected with his earlier life which affected his whole professional career. In 1850, while teaching in his native Hesse, he was arrested and deprived of his position for writing an article in favor of the constitution. In consequence of this he went to Zürich, so that the political reaction following upon the year 1848 was the cause of his going to Switzerland and the beginning of his long work in connection with the Zürich University.

Next to Professor Volkmar perhaps the most widely known man in the faculty is Professor Heinrich Kesselring, at present rector of the university. He is a man sixty years of age, whose specialties are New Testament theology and exegesis, and his reputation depends partly upon his broad interest in and connection with various philanthropic movements. Theologically, Prof. Kesselring belongs decidedly to the liberal wing, though he is not so aggressively radical as many others. His scholarship is broad as well as careful, but one of his chief charms is his delightful courtesy. He is exceedingly popular as rector and to know him adds much to the pleasure of a stay in Zürich.

Professor Paul Christ is one of the clearest thinkers in the faculty. There is nothing particularly striking or impressive in his appearance, but those who follow his lectures cannot fail to appreciate the keenness and comprehensiveness of his analysis. His principal course is ethics, but he also loves to take up some special theme, such as the philosophy of Hartmann or the theology of Schleiermacher. He is at the farthest remove from being the typical popular professor, but it is seldom that one so wins the admiration of those who patiently follow his thought. A great misfortune is that he slowly dictates almost the entire hour. In my judgment it would be a great gain if he, and with him many another German professor, would only be persuaded to print that which he now dictates, and, putting it in the hands of his students, then spend the hour in amplification and illustration. Professor Christ is another member of the theological "left." His dogmatic position is much like that of Professor Pfeiderer of Berlin, whom he greatly admires as a philosopher and theologian, but he holds much more closely than does Pfeiderer to Baur's school of New Testament criticism.

It would be difficult to find in the Zürich faculty any influential representative of traditional or even moderate orthodoxy. The center, the *Vermittlungstheologie* or *Ritschlianism*, is represented by the professor who has the chair of dogmatic theology, Professor G. von Schulthess-Rechberg.¹

Professor Schulthess is a young man of thirty-seven, who has somewhat recently become a member of the faculty. He is tall, exceedingly courteous, and seriously endeavors to teach a system of theology which shall be at once Biblical and also in harmony with modern critical and theological methods. How far such a system is removed from traditional orthodoxy becomes sufficiently manifest, however, when we bear in mind such facts as the following: *viz.*, that, according to Professor Schulthess, the Biblical idea of the divine righteousness or justice has nothing to do with distributive justice, and this in the New Testament as well as in the Old; and also that the church doctrines of the Logos

¹In Switzerland a double name like Schulthess-Rechberg is used to avoid confusion, Rechberg being simply the maiden name of Mrs. Schulthess.

and the personality of the Holy Spirit are to be rejected as later additions to the simple gospel.

This *Vermittlungstheologie* is by no means so popular in Switzerland as it is in Germany, but it still has many adherents among those who are unwilling to make a complete break, either with criticism or with the terminology of received orthodoxy. This is especially true of students who spend a semester or two in Germany, and who are very apt to come back *ver-Ritschli*, as one of the professors expressed it.

One of the best lecturers in the faculty is Professor Victor Ryssel, of the chair of Old Testament exegesis and theology. He was born in Saxony in 1849, and studied in Leipzig under Professor Delitzsch. For four years he was extraordinary professor at Leipzig, and came to Zürich as full professor in 1889. He is a man of fine presence, and has a good delivery. So far as one can judge by the expressions of the students, his course on Old Testament theology was the most popular one given in the theological department last summer, of which a further evidence is perhaps the fact that he ventured to give it at seven o'clock in the morning.

As a pupil of Professor Delitzsch, his theological antecedents are of course rather conservative, but he is a man of thoroughly scientific spirit, who is gladly heard by men of all "tendencies."

These are the leading men of the Zürich theological faculty, although I have not yet mentioned the venerable church historian, Professor Otto F. Fritzsche, who is now eighty years old and has been a member of the faculty since 1837. Unlike Professor Volkmar, he is now in feeble health, and last year was unable to give all the lectures which were announced in the catalogue.

It must always be borne in mind that the educational attractions of Zürich for an American pastor or student of theology are not confined to this one faculty, or even to the university itself. In the same fine building, overlooking city and lake and Alps, are held not only the lectures of the university, which belongs to the canton of Zürich, but also those of the Polytechnicum, which is supported by the entire Swiss confederation.

Students of either school have the privilege of attending lectures in the other, and it is no slight privilege to be able to listen to such men as the philosopher Avenarius of the university, or Stern and Platter of the Polytechnicum in history and social science.

It should also be noted that in Zürich, Bern and Geneva the lectures are open to women.